

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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SUBJECT: DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: ROME 1907

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: RELIEF BILL FOR SOUTHERN FLOOD VICTIMS CONTINUED CAUSE GRIEF, BUT NOT IRREPARABLE DAMAGE, TO GOVT. DEBATE WITHIN DC FEATURED REITERATION BY RUMOR OF INTEREST IN NEW DC- PSI RELATIONSHIP AND PICCOLI' S CAUTIONARY REMARKS ON SAME SUBJECT. END SUMMARY.

2. GOVT SUFFERED EMBARRASSING BUT NOT FATAL PARLIAMENTARY DEFEAT IN EFFORT TO WIN CHAMBER APPROVAL FOR DECREE MEASURE GRANTING RELIEF TO SOUTHERN FLOOD VICTIMS WHICH HAD ALREADY SUFFERED CHANGES IMPOSED BY OPPOSITION IN SENATE (SEE REFTEL). SUBSTANTIAL ABSENCES IN MAJORITY CAMP ALLOWED PASSAGE, OVER GOVT OBJECTION, OF TWO AMENDMENTS INITIALLY PROPOSED BY DEPUTIES FROM DC' S FARTHEST- LEFT " FORZE NUOVE" FACTION AND LATER PURSUED BY COMMUNISTS AND SOCIALISTS. ALTHOUGH " FORZE NUOVE" DID NOT ACTIVELY PUSH EITHER AMENDMENT, AND INDEED ATTEMPTED WITHDRAW SECOND OF THEM, EXTENT TO WHICH FACTION MEMBERS MAY HAVE SUPPORTED AMENDMENTS ON SECRET BALLOT IS NOT KNOWN. NECESSITY FOR MEASURE TO BE RECONSIDERED BY SENATE RENDERS UNLIKELY ITS APPROVAL BEFORE MARCH 24 DEADLINE. SPECULATION IS GROWING THAT GOVT WILL LET IT DIE AND SUBSTITUTE NEW DECREE LAW.

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3. ACTIVE PRE- CONGRESS DEBATE WITHIN DC FEATURED MARCH 17 MEETING OF PICCOLI- RUMOR FACTION, PARTY' S LARGEST, WITH PRIMARY FOCUS ON REMARKS BY INTERIOR MIN RUMOR SPEAKING - AS HE HAS PREVIOUSLY - IN FAVOR OF EXPLORING RETURN TO DC- PSI COLLABORATION. RUMOR STRESSED NEED FOR LARGER GOVT MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT TO CONFRONT SERIOUS PROBLEMS FACING COUNTRY. SIMILARLY NECESSARY WAS AVOIDANCE OF POLITICAL BIPOLARIZATION WHICH WOULD RESULT WERE PSI TO FALL AGAIN UNDER HEGEMONY OF COMMUNISTS. ANY RE- EDITION OF CENTER- LEFT, HOWEVER, MUST COME AS " NEW PAGE" IN DC- PSI RELATIONS, SAID RUMOR, AND CANNOT BE BASED ON PREMISE THAT PREVIOUS CENTER- LEFT EXPERIENCE REQUIRED NO CORRECTION. RUMOR SAID NEW DIALOGUE MUST BEGIN WITH SERIOUS AUTO- CRITICISM ON PART OF FORMER CENTER- LEFT PARTNERS BEFORE PROCEEDING TO POSSIBLE AGREEMENT ON PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS. THE PASSAGE OF SUCH PROGRAMS WOULD REQUIRE ABSOLUTE AUTONOMY IN PARLIAMENT, LOYALTY AND SOLIDARITY AMONG THE GOVT PARTIES. ON LATTER POINT, RUMOR SAID IN NO WAY COULD NEW CENTER- LEFT STRETCH BEYOND PSI TO INVOLVE COMMUNISTS. IN QUALIFYING ABOVE REMARKS, RUMOR CLEARLY EXPRESSED COLIDARITY WITH ANDREOTTI GOVT INDICATING THEREBY THAT HE ENVISIONS NO MOVE TOWARD ALTERNATIVE GOVT BEFORE DC CONGRESS.

3. ALTHOUGH EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR RUMOR POSITIONS DURING MARCH 17 FACTION MEETING, PICCOLI HASTENED TO PLACE INTERIOR MIN' S REMARKS IN SETTING MORE ACCEPTABLE TO CONSERVATIVE " DOROTEI" RANK- AND- FILE. IN MARCH 19 SPEECH, PICCOLI SAID RUMOR' S REMARKS HAD BEEN LIFTED BY PRESS OUT OF MORE GLOBAL CONTEXT WHICH WENT BEYOND DC- PSI RELATIONS TO DEAL WITH ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS FACING ITALY - PROBLEMS, HE SAID, WHICH CANNOT BE SOLVED BY " MAGIC OF POLITICAL FORMULAS." PICCOLI ALSO REMINDED THE FAITHFUL THAT FACTION INCLUDED MANY WHO WERE IN FOREFRONT OF EFFORT TO BREAK WITH DETERIORATING CENTER- LEFT EXPERIENCE PRIOR TO EVENTS OF 1972. ANY CENTER- LEFT RESTORATION MUST ACCORDINGLY COME WITHIN SECURE FRAMEWORK AND WITH DEFINITE GUARANTEES. SIMILAR NOTE OF CAUTION WAS SOUNDED BY DC SENATE LEADER SPAGNOLLI, ALSO A PROMINENT MEMBER OF PICCOLI- RUMOR FACTION. IN SPEECH DEFENDING ANDREOTTI GOVT, DC PARTY SECY FORLANI ALSO INVITED SOCIALISTS TO ASSUME MORE CONSTRUCTIVE POSITION VIS- A- VIS SERIOUS PROBLEMS FACING COUNTRY.

4. SOCIALIST MINORITY LEADER MANCINI WAS QUICK TO ASSERT THAT CONTRASTS IN VIEW BETWEEN PICCOLI AND RUMOR DEMONSTRATE THAT PARTY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SECY DE MARTINO' S GOAL OF RENEWED CENTER- LEFT COOPERATION REMAINS

" AN ILLUSION." REPUBLICAN PARTY ORGAN " LA VOCE REPUBBLICANA" BE-
MOANED CONFUSION CAUSED BY WHAT IT TERMS " DOROTEO SEESAW." FOR
SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, PARTY SECY ORLANDI HAS REITERATED PSDI READINESS
FOR DIALOGUE, BUT REPEATED INSISTENCE THAT RENEWED NATIONAL CO-
OPERATION MUST BE PREDICATED UPON PROOF OF FULL SOCIALIST AUTO-
NOMY FROM COMMUNISTS AND WILL TO IMPLEMENT CENTER- LEFT FORMULA
AT LOCAL GOVT LEVELS AS WELL. VOLPE

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